

AN AMERICAN ESTATE SHOWING CHINESE INFLUENCE

by

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B. S., Lingnan University
Canton, China, 1945

A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Horticulture

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1949

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to design an estate showing Chinese influence that would be practical in the United States.

It was assumed that the estate would be in the vicinity of Washington, D. C. and that it would be occupied by the Chinese Ambassador to this country. The ambassador, while he resides in this country, would like to have gardens on his estate showing Chinese characteristics.

PROCEDURE

Although the problem itself is purely hypothetical, it was designed from an accurate topography. The selected site is approximately nineteen acres in size. It is a piece of high land and discloses beautiful views of the surrounding country.

After the site was selected, careful studies of its topography were made to determine the best location for the house and its relation to the various features of the estate, such as the gardens, walks, drives, service area, swimming pool, tennis court and the vistas over the surrounding country. From these preliminary sketches a general plan was drawn to a scale of one inch equals thirty feet. This plan was then transferred to water color paper, traced in ink, and rendered

in Chinese ink as shown in Plate I.

A drawing of the area adjacent to the house and the gardens was next enlarged in order to show more clearly the landscape development. This enlarged plan was drawn to a scale of one inch equals ten feet. It was also transferred to water color paper, inked, and rendered in Chinese ink as shown in Plate II. Other plans such as the grading plan and planting plan of the same area, in the same scale, were drawn on vellum in ink. They are shown in Plates III and IV.

DESCRIPTION OF DESIGN

In this design, a wall enclosed garden and a courtyard garden are the main themes. These gardens were placed in intimate relation to the house and somewhat in the Chinese manner. Rocks and trained picturesque trees, flagstone paved areas and pavilions were introduced in the garden in order to give it some of the characters common to Chinese gardens. The walled garden south of the house can be enjoyed from the living room. In this garden, a rectangular pool is placed in the middle. With two pieces of fantastic shaped rocks protruding from its water surface, it became the keynote of the design. Most of the ground in this garden, except the shrub borders along the garden wall, was paved. These borders are enclosed by low walls which are two and one-half feet high and are in

tile grille work. A moon door opens through the wall on the west side of the garden leading into a naturalistic area with open lawns and woods.

Another garden, the courtyard garden, is enclosed on three sides by the house and on the fourth side by a covered corridor. This garden can also be enjoyed from the living room through large plate glass windows. The dominate feature of this garden is the T'ai or the terrace bed in the middle. This bed was enclosed by a wall one and one-half feet high. A small picturesque tree and a broadleaf evergreen were planted in this bed. These would give it a beautiful effect in spring when the plants are in bloom. Pavement was also used in this garden instead of turf. The covered corridor decorated with artistic railings is also an outstanding feature in this garden. This corridor, at the west side of the courtyard garden, serves as a passage way between the living room and the study.

The third garden is the perennial garden located north of the house. It can not be seen from the house. This garden is enclosed by an evergreen hedge and wall. The beauty of the perennial garden is enhanced by the lotus pool shown in the design. It would be a pleasant place to visit during summer time when the lotus are in bloom and the summer breeze carries their fragrance through the garden.

To the north of the perennial garden is a swimming pool

thirty-five by sixty feet. To the east of the swimming pool is a paved tennis court. Both are approached from the house by shrub and flower bordered walks and yet without interference with the garden.

SUMMARY

As a result of this study, it is felt that this kind of landscape design should be adaptable, in many instances, to estates in the United States.

An American estate showing Chinese influence could be just as functional and practical as other styles of landscape design. The wall enclosed and the courtyard gardens give privacy, are easy to maintain and produce lasting effects and permanent beauty. The pleasing appearance in these gardens is still preserved in winter days when most of the plant materials in the gardens are dormant.

Due to climatic and geologic similarities, the construction and plant materials used in American landscape design do not differ greatly from those used in China. It would be difficult, however, in this country to hire craftsmen that possessed the taste and artistry to execute the beautiful and intricate designs commonly found in Chinese gardens.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE I

General Plan

The General plan shows the landscape development and the topography of the entire estate. The contours are at one foot intervals. The original plan was drawn to a scale of one inch equals thirty feet on water color paper and rendered in Chinese ink.



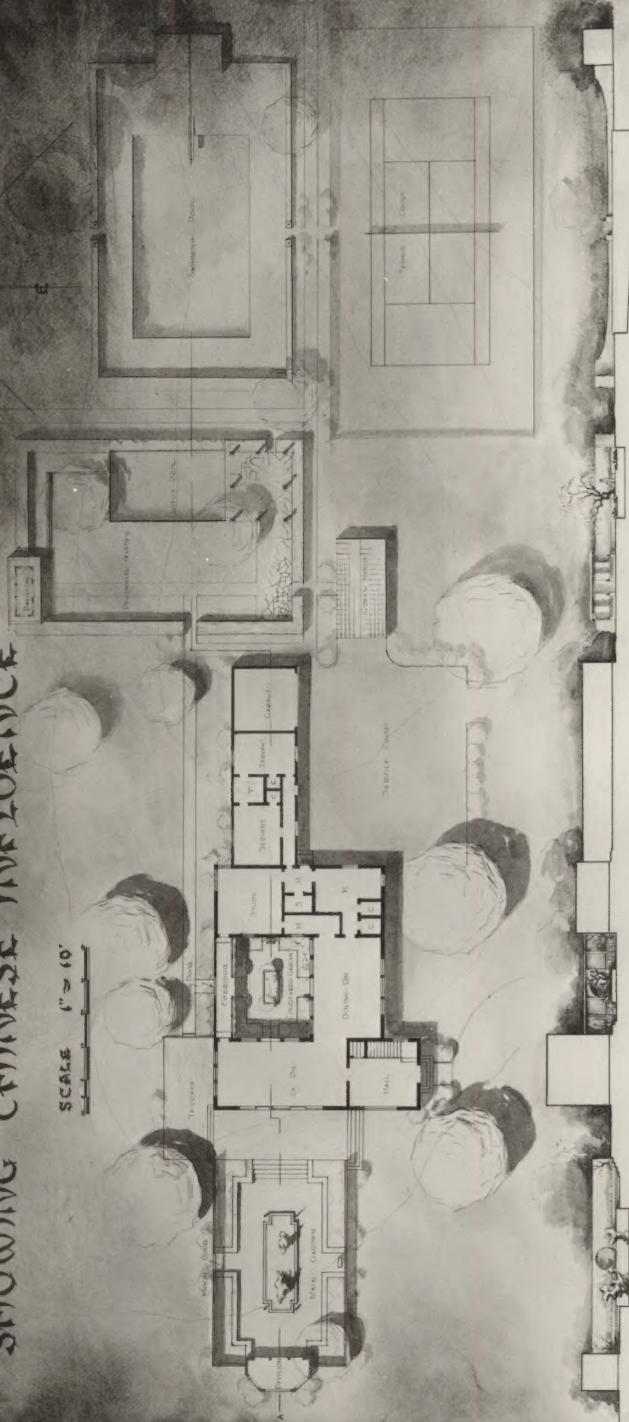
EXPLANATION OF PLATE II

House and Gardens

Plate II shows the design of the house and garden areas. The original plan was drawn to a scale of one inch equals ten feet. It was drawn on water color paper and rendered in Chinese ink. The section A-A' was taken along the major axis of the house and gardens and shows the differences in elevation of the house and gardens.

HOUSE AND GARDENS
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SCALE 1" = 10'



SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURE KANSAS STATE COLLEGE MANHATTAN KANSAS

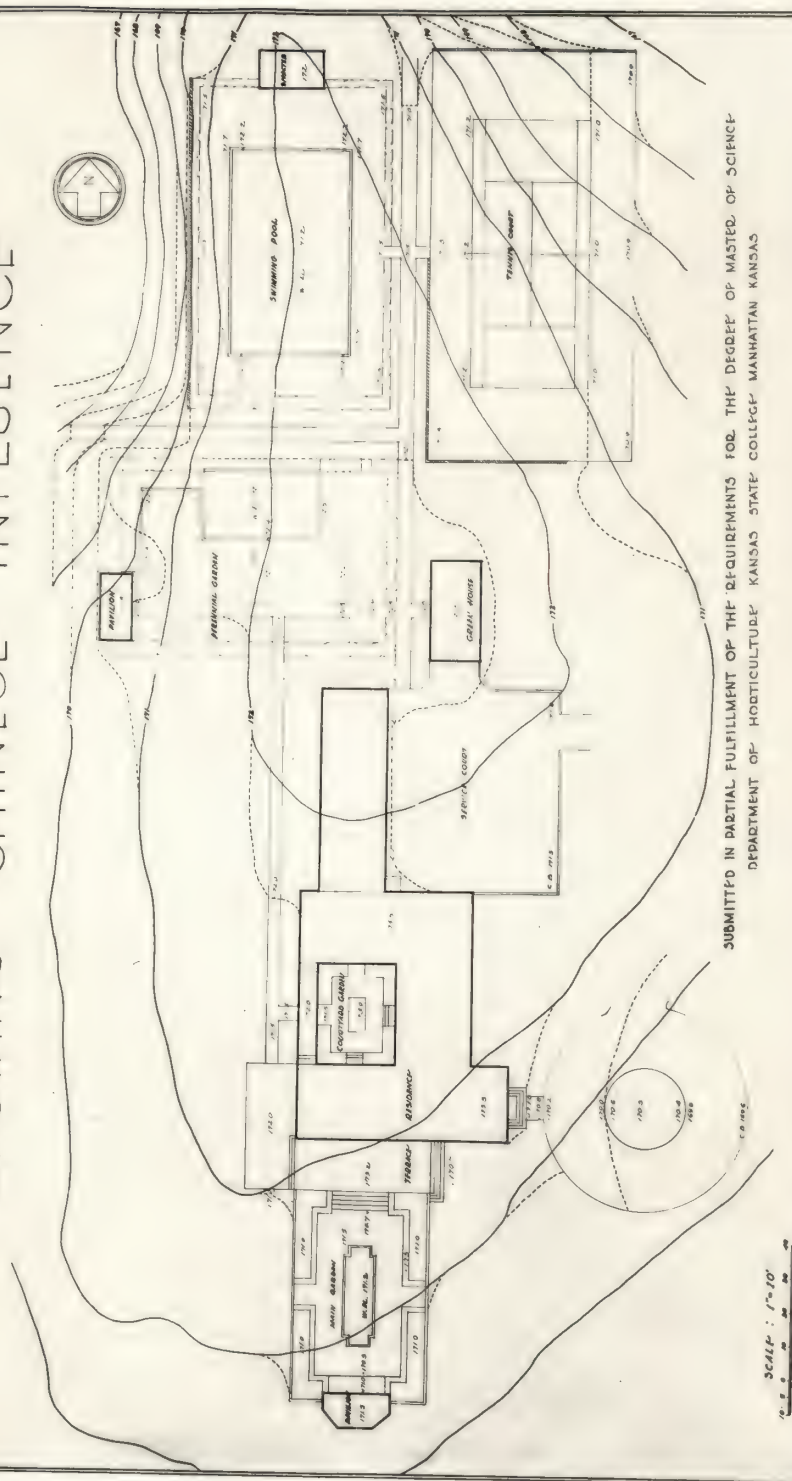
EXPLANATION OF PLATE III

Grading Plan

Plate III, drawn on vellum to a scale of one inch equals ten feet, gives the existing contours as solid lines and the proposed contours as broken lines. Elevation of all the principal points are given directly on the plan.

PLATE III

GRADING PLAN FOR HOUSE AND GARDEN AREAS AN AMERICAN ESTATE SHOWING CHINESE INFLUENCE



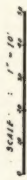
SCALE: 1"=10'

EXPLANATION OF PLATE IV

Planting Plan

Plate IV is the planting plan of the house and garden areas.
The original plan was drawn in ink on vellum, to a scale of one
inch equals ten feet.

PLANTING PLAN FOR HOUSE AND GARDEN AREAS
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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author is indeed indebted to Professor L. R. Quinlan for his invaluable assistance in outlining the problem and for his constructive criticism of the design, and to Dr. W. F. Pickett and Professor R. J. Barnett for their helpful suggestions.

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